

Dorothe G. Scott Oral History Interview

Preface

When Felter “Skeeter” Johnson was preparing to retire as Secretary of the Senate he paid tribute to a “loyal, a devoted, and a dedicated individual” associated with him. “I would say that next to my immediate family, she has been the closest to me. To put it mildly, in her association with me, she has put up with a great deal. I refer to Dorothe Scott, my administrative assistant.” When Senate Democrats elected Johnston Secretary of the Majority in 1945, Dorothe Scott became his secretary and administrative assistant. Ten years later, when Johnston was elected Secretary of the Senate, Dorothe Scott moved “downstairs” with him as administrative assistant. After Johnston retired in 1965, she continued in her post under Secretaries of the Senate Emery Frazier (1966) and Frank Valeo (1966-1973), until her retirement in 1977.

Born in Philadelphia on March 26, 1921, Dorothe Scott attended school in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. and graduated from the Washington School for Secretaries. During the Second World War she worked for the Army Corps of Engineers, and then briefly for the Aerodynamic Research Corporation, before joining the Senate staff. In the office of the Democratic Secretary, Scott kept voting records on senators, prepared announcements for the majority leader on absent senators during roll-call votes, arranged for “live pairs,” and provided Democratic senators with information

on the day's floor schedule and all pending legislation. Through these assignments she became thoroughly familiar with Senate procedures.

As administrative assistant in the office of the Secretary of the Senate, Dorothy Scott's functions expanded to cover a wide range of Senate-related activities in the many offices under the Secretary's jurisdiction. Especially during the 1950s, when the Secretary's suite contained one of the few private dining rooms in the Capitol, Dorothy Scott arranged for the almost daily luncheons for the Democratic leadership and the senior members who constitute the Senate's powerful "inner club." Perhaps the most regular visitor to these luncheons was Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson, about whom she offers numerous observations and anecdotes. In her oral history she also recounts the many visiting celebrities, from British Prime Minister Anthony Eden to actress Jayne Mansfield.

Since the Democratic Secretary and Secretary of the Senate traditionally played significant roles in the Democratic National Conventions, Dorothy Scott attended the conventions from 1948 to 1956 in official capacities, and those in 1964 and 1972 out of personal interest. She offers commentary on these conventions and on the many senators who served during her thirty-two years with the United States Senate. She has also published a memoir called *When the Senate Halls Were Hallowed* (Los Angeles: Carillon Press, 2000).